

CHILDHOOD ON KAMBARA

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the help of the girls, prepare the greens by removing the leaves from the stems, and attend to the boiling. 854
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Mother and child are practically inseparable. The mother rarely goes out of the village, but spends most of her time with other women in one of the kitchen houses of her clan, her baby on her lap or close beside her. Sometimes she strolls leisurely through the village to see a relative, her infant slung on her back or over one hip in a piece of cloth or barkcloth, which has been slipped under one arm and over the opposite shoulder and knotted over the chest. The mother plays with her baby, talks to him, and pets him. Long before the child is able to stand she amuses herself by propping him up against her breasts, his feet on her lap. Moving his little body rhythmically in imitation of the dance, she chants to him. She calls him "little pig" and sings lullabies to put him to sleep. At night the child sleeps beside her on the mat. 854

The mother usually suckles the baby whenever he cries, which may be three or four times in one hour. He is allowed to nurse as long as he cares to. If she is sitting with flexed legs crossed in front she lays the child across her lap. While sucking her right breast he is supported by her right arm, her left hand upholding the lower end of her breast. During the process of nursing the mother often rocks the child by rhythmically moving the flexed leg on which he rests. If she is lying down she lays the child beside and facing her, places the sling she uses for carrying him in a wad under his head, and gives him her breast. The child is not interrupted to change breasts nor is the breast withdrawn until he rejects it. The weaning process is gradual and without shock to the child. 862
At the age of three or four months he is fed baked papaw or raw mango, usually half-ripe, in a casual fashion. Now and then bits of baked sweet potato or breadfruit are slipped into his mouth. Gradually he eats more and more solid food until, at the age of about one year he is fully weaned. I did not observe any child sucking his thumb. [157]